

## Drugs and the brain, the MOOC (221.2)

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### Abstract

How does a MOOC differ in value and impact from previous "distance-learning" technologies? (1) A major additional possibility is the online community that springs up around the course. "Drugs and the Brain" brought some people with real-life interest in drug mechanisms, and others with detailed scientific experience. Quantifying the latter group: of the students who finished the 2012–2013 course and earned "statements of accomplishment", ~ 10% of the students had PHD degrees and 7% had MD degrees, and ~ 7% had professional degrees in pharmacy. This online community requires detailed curation, moderation, and judgment. For the 2013–2014 rendition, we plan to have two undergraduate TA's as curators. (2) A secondary possibility is the concept of instantaneous feedback on exams and quizzes. This can also be incorporated in previous technologies. What are limitations of the MOOC? (1) After all limitations in bandwidth and technology have been overcome, "internet time" will still be constrained by the fact that the world is round. The instructor will be asleep when some students want to communicate, and vice-versa. (2) The course staff must invest formidable effort to optimize the learning experience. In this area, we include analyzing quiz responses, clicks, etc. We also include human evaluation of essays and other student responses. These are both wonderful problems, in the sense that we have too much data!